The cess amount has been increased approximately three folds to the original amount in 1992 for this purpose.

4. The State Governments have been requested to enhance the budgetary provisions of the respective State Pollution Control Boards and to allow them to create new posts for effective functioning.

5. A study has also been conducted by the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad on the strengthening of the Pollution Control Boards. The report has been prepared based on a detailed study of four Pollution Control Boards namely Gujarat, Maharastra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The salient features of the report inter-alia are:

(i) suggestions have been made for policy changes like preparation of Annual Environmental Quality Report by Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) transforming the reglatory focus to technical competence focus in the PCBs Preparation of comprehensive programmes for pollution control have been proposed involving pollution source inventorisation, pollution control plans etc., by PCBs. Operational changes have been suggested in functioning of the State.

(ii) The strengthening of infrastructure in terms of technical manpower and equipment of the State Pollution Control Boards have been suggested.

(iii) The role of Central Pollution Control Board and other agencies have been mentioned with respect to providing technical support including human resource development.

(iv) Introduction of mass standards, preparation of area specific environment plans, inventorisation of pollution source, hazardous waste management etc., are some of the major areas for development.

Area Covered by Forests

1121. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the area covered by forests in India is 64 million ha. i.e. 19.47% of the country land out of which 31 million ha. consists of degraded forests; and

(b) if so, whether there is any programme to increase the density of these degraded forests?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) (a) As per State of Forest Report, 1995, the forest cover in the country is 63.96 million ha. i.e. 19.46% of the geographical area, out of which 24.93 million ha. consists of degraded forests.

(b) Following programmes are undertaken for increasing the density of forests:

(i) Extensive afforestation programmes are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India for afforestation, protection of forests and restoration of ecological balance;

(ii) Various Externally Aided projects in the forestry sector are being implemented for increasing the density of degraded forests;

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all the State Governments to involve village communities for the regeneration of degraded forests through Joint Forest Management.

National Forestry Action Plan

1122. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Forestry Action Plan with the assistance of UNDP and FAO was signed in June 1993; and

(b) if so, what are the results achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) (a) yes sir, the project "Formulation of National Forestry Action Programme" was signed with UNDP and FAO in June 1993.

(b) Draft National Forestry Action Programme document is in final stages of compilation.

Import of waste Materials

1123. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that huge amount of lead ash and other waste material is being imported from different countries resulting into great risk of health and environmental hazards for the countrymen;

(b) if so, the names of the countries from where such import is being resorted to and the limitations thereof;

(c) criteria for allowing such import and the names of the companies including multinational companies operating such import in the country;

(d) the next of such import having taken place during the last three years; and

(e) the preventive steps taken to dispose of such waste?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) to (e) Wastes such as lead ash and other waste materials are imported only as raw material for processing/reuse in the country.

The import of hazardous wastes is regulated under the Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules, 1989 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. According to these rules, the import of hazardous wastes from any country to India is not permitted for dumping and disposal, however, import of such wastes is allowed for reprocessing/reuse as raw material in an environmentally sound manner.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has given only 7 permissions for import of hazardous wastes under the Hazardous Wastes (Management & Handling) Rules 1989 Statement (See below). In April 1995, the Export Import Policy (EXIM) was amended and the hazardous wastes were placed in the restricted list. As per the policy, imports are permitted only against a licence and only for the purpose of reprocessing or reuse. The licence for imports are issued by the Directorate Geenral of Foreign Trade (DGFT). In compliance with the orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, no imports of toxic wastes are being permitted from 10.4.96.

Statement

List of units granted permission to import hazardous wastes under HW Rules

1. *Importer* M/s. Balmer Lawrie & Co. Calcutta

One time permission for the import of 150 KL of waste oil for trial runs for R&D project in December 1993.

Exporting Country—Dubai

2. *Importer* M/s Southern Refineries Ltd., Trivandrum

One time permission for import of 8000 barrels of waste oil for trial run to demonstrate waste oil re-refining by vacuum distillation technology in 1994.

Exporting country-UK

3. *Importer* M/s Zinc Smelters & Refiners India Pvt. Ltd., Bombay

One time permission for the import of single consignment of not exceeding 20,000 Mt of zinc containing residual dusts (steel mill dust) on 20th June, 1994.

Exporting Country—Germany

4. *Importer* M/s Bharat Zinc Ltd., Bhopal

M/s Bharat Zinc Ltd., was given permission to negotiate import of 17,000 MT of zinc ash/residue/dross/scrap from various countries of Europe with a condition that clearance would be sought from time